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A STUDY IN FANATICISM



*The Neturei Karta
Extremist Group*

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PART I

**The Neturei Karta
Extremist Group**

1. On Saturday, 26 October 1963, violent incidents occurred in the north-east (*Batei Ungarn*) section of the orthodox Mea Shearim quarter in Jerusalem when a group of *Neturei Karta* extremists demonstrated against the passage of vehicles along the neighbouring Shivtei Israel Street from the Mandelbaum Gate to the city centre. Stones, bottles and pieces of furniture were thrown at the police, who quelled the disturbances by directing hoses at the demonstrators. Abusive language was hurled at the policemen, including repeated cries of "Nazis!" "Gestapo!" and "Murderers!" On that same evening, the nearby offices of the Ministry of Education were broken into and ransacked.

The demonstration of 26 October was the climax to a series of recurrent Sabbath disturbances in the same vicinity, which began three months earlier on 27 July 1963. Invariably, these incidents were accompanied by the throwing of stones at police and passing vehicles. (See Appendix II, page 43.)

In New York, on Monday, 4 November 1963, some 1,000 ultra-orthodox Jews, followers of the Satmar Rebbe, Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, demonstrated in front of the New York office of the Israel Consulate General. The demonstration was directed

against the State of Israel and in support of the *Neturei Karta* group of Jerusalem. Swastikas were daubed on the building and anti-Israel leaflets were distributed in Yiddish and English. These accused the State of Israel of "conducting an inquisition against religion," described the State as "a Nazi regime," called upon Jews to withdraw their assistance to Israel since "the contributions are used to purchase truncheons for the Israeli Police who are carrying out pogroms," and accused the Israel Government of "preparing murderous plots against innocent human beings." The demonstrators carried placards protesting against "brutalities" and "conversions" in Israel. According to eyewitness reports in the Jewish and non-Jewish press, there was a threat of violence at one point, when the marchers began to scream "Lousy Nazi murderers!" and strained against the police barriers.

2. Vilification of the State of Israel

These demonstrations, and the frenzy of hatred surrounding them, cannot but give rise to concern, vilifying as they do the name of Israel and the State's democratically elected authorities.

The protests are based entirely on such ludicrous distortions and outright falsehoods that they might perhaps, in normal circumstances, be dismissed. But the demonstrations have taken on such sensational proportions, and attracted such widespread press coverage, that these vicious slanders against the State of Israel, which upholds freedom of religion as one

of its basic principles, cannot be allowed to pass without comment.

3. The Strength of *Neturei Karta*

The *Neturei Karta* group does not deny its responsibility for the organization of the Sabbath demonstrations, and indeed there is ample police evidence to uphold this admission. In Israel its adherents are concentrated almost entirely in the Mea Shearim quarter of Jerusalem, and authoritative observers estimate their strength at no more than a few hundred families. Because, however, of their militant policies, inflammatory statements and irresponsible, lawless and sensational behaviour they at times receive publicity out of all proportion to their true strength and influence.

4. Attitude of the Religious Community towards *Neturei Karta*

The decisive and overwhelming majority of observant Jews in Israel dissociate themselves entirely from the excesses and doctrines of this small extremist fringe group. If any proof of this is required it is to be seen in the full participation of the religious section of the community in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the State. It is, moreover, confirmed by the numerous public statements of representative orthodox leaders in the Knesset and elsewhere.

There is a common misconception that the orthodox Mea Shearim quarter is inhabited solely by

Neturei Karta adherents. In fact, of its 20,000 residents only a few hundred are self-confessed followers of *Neturei Karta*, with some few hundreds more classed as sympathizers. The vast majority are orthodox Jews who are law-abiding and loyal citizens of the State and have, on a number of occasions, sought to restrain the handful of extremist militants in their midst.

5. *The Neturei Karta Doctrine*

Neturei Karta is an Aramaic term meaning "The Guardians of the City." The doctrines of the group call for complete isolation from the general community and total dissociation from the State of Israel and its institutions.

The roots of the *Neturei Karta* doctrine lie in the conception that any attempt by man to further national redemption through his own practical initiative is an act of heresy. By taking their fate into their own hands, human beings thereby presume to set the pace of Messianic redemption—thus revealing a lack of faith which must, inevitably, postpone the coming of complete and ultimate Divine salvation. The *Neturei Karta* group emerged as a militant force when the Zionist enterprise began in the Land of Israel some 80 years ago, and assumed a progressively hostile character as the Jewish population of Israel moved forward to independence.

Writing in the 15 November, 1963 issue of *Hatzofeh* (the daily organ of the Mizrahi-Hapoel-Hamizrahi religious Zionist organization), one of

the leading orthodox thinkers in Israel defines the *Neturei Karta* attitude to the State of Israel in the following words:

[For them] the State of Israel has no right of existence, even were its regime governed in accordance with Torah practice. The reason is that according to their religious doctrine, it is prohibited for Israel to have any form of Jewish government. Consequently, it is their prayer that the State of Israel may cease to exist...

6. *Neturei Karta and the Religious Parties*

The organized religious bodies and groupings are anathemas to the *Neturei Karta*—even more than the secular Zionists. The Chief Rabbinate, the religious community organizations, the religious parties are mercilessly denounced, because they give a stamp of legitimacy to a blasphemous cause. In the book, *The Transformation*, which is an authoritative exposition of the *Neturei Karta* outlook written in English by one I. I. I. Domb, a self-confessed disciple of the doctrine, we find the following reference to the Mizrahi party which is founded on the principles of religious Zionism:

Mizrahi was a very unfortunate and mistaken movement for which religious Jewry paid a very high price. In their attempt to bridge the wide unbridgeable gulf separating religion from its real adversaries, they helped to undermine their own faith... The root of Zionism is heresy, and its branches can hardly be otherwise. Zionist philo-

sophy, as a whole, sought to eliminate the godly fabric from the life of the Jewish people, and its Mizrahi agents have merely been invested with the original function of adulterating the holiness of our Torah with the taint of unbelief (page 27).

Ever since the 1930's, when Agudat Israel (a non-Zionist party which stands for the strictest observance of orthodoxy) began undertaking practical tasks in Israel in such fields as rescue from Nazi Europe, immigration, defence and settlement, the *Neturei Karta* has castigated this party with particular venom. Indeed, not a few of the contemporary *Neturei Karta* followers belonged to it at one time and only left when it began to cooperate with the recognized Jewish authorities and engage in direct practical action. Of Agudat Israel, Domb writes:

Agudas Yisroel is an example of the lack of real Torah leadership and the results of its absence. Agudas Yisroel has lost both its way and its identity because it has been guided through ordinary human tendencies. All other parties which have ordinary earthly human programmes and ideals may succeed in fulfilling and realizing them by natural means. We Jews, however, in general, and movements with the purpose of spreading Torah and sanctity in particular, are governed by laws other than the laws of nature and, where we are concerned, the appearance of ordinary men with ordinary conceptions of policy at the helm can only result in the overthrow and destruction of the movement and, in fact, in degradation to the lowest levels rarely reached even by worldly organizations (page 48).

And further:

The Aguda was founded with one main aim in view, namely, defence against Zionist heresy. Today it has become the most dangerous adversary of religious Jewry, a kind of centre for the distribution of bacteria, in places where they can do must harm, on soil where, without Aguda co-operation, there would have been little opportunity for Zionist domination (page 65).

7. *The Concept of Separation*

Neturei Karta is not an organization in the usual sense of the term and certainly not a political party. Formal membership does not exist; a person becomes an adherent by accepting the unconditional authority of the group's leadership and embracing the doctrine of complete separation from the general community and total dissociation from the State of Israel.

Their popular leader is a veteran Jerusalemite, Rabbi Amram Blau, who, throughout the years, has served as the group's principal spokesman and the most militant exponent of its cause.

8. *Record of Hooliganism before the Establishment of the State*

Motivated by this doctrine of anti-Zionism, the *Neturei Karta* extremists adopted, throughout, a policy of harassment and, at times, outright violence against all manifestations of autonomous national existence in Israel and, first and foremost, against

the formation of communal religious organizational institutions.

They conducted a libel campaign against the first Chief Rabbi of the Land of Israel, the late Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook. This took the form of posters and pamphlets execrating his name, demonstrations, stone-throwings and even, on one occasion, hurling a bucket of filth at his person. They launched vicious personal attacks on the veteran Rabbi of Jerusalem, the late Rabbi Zvi Pessah Frank, who was universally recognized as the foremost authority on questions of Jewish law. Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Harlap, a renowned scholar of Jerusalem, was the victim of their ceaseless persecution and personal abuse. On one occasion they published an inflammatory leaflet against the head of one of the largest Hassidic groups, the Rebbe of Gur, which elicited sharp censure from the Agudat Israel leadership.

When, in February 1921, the foundation conference of the Israel Chief Rabbinate was convened in Jerusalem, this extremist group (then still a part of Agudat Israel) declared a day of fasting and mourning. In a protest to the British authorities, they demanded that their community organization, (the *Eda Haharedit*) be exempt from the authority of the Chief Rabbinate.

Over the course of years, they repeatedly declared days of fasting and organized demonstrations—against pronouncements of the democratically constituted Jewish community bodies, against the right

of women to vote, against the *shehita* (ritual slaughter) supervised by the community rabbis, and, of course, against Zionist activities and Sabbath desecrations.

On occasion, their acts of hooliganism and wild statements reached such a pitch that the responsible religious authorities in Jerusalem felt compelled to take action. Thus in the spring of 1933, following a particularly vicious assault on Chief Rabbi Kook, the rabbis and heads of Yeshivot (talmudical seminaries) in Jerusalem issued a public statement condemning the *Neturei Karta* "gang" (Hebrew: *knufia*) for their libellous attacks and insinuations.

In this period of mounting tension, when the Jewish community in Israel was involved in trying to rescue as many Jews as could be saved from Nazi Europe, and later from the D.P. camps, and when they were faced with the threat of attack from outside, not only did the *Neturei Karta* totally disassociate themselves from the general struggle, but they openly declared their opposition to immigration, settlement and the right of the Jews to an independent State. True, they were then, as now, a tiny group and politically insignificant. But the very sensationalism of their attacks, and the fanaticism of their actions and pronouncements (which so often rode rough-shod over all elementary decencies), attracted publicity which spread beyond the confines of Mea Shearim.

9. *Record of Treason During the War of Independence*

Israel's battle for freedom in 1948 mustered the total strength of the Jewish population in the Land of Israel, with the exception of the *Neturei Karta* extremists. They never recognized the legitimacy of the fight, nor did they accept the authority of the State when it finally came into being. In an open declaration published when besieged Jerusalem came under Jewish administration they wrote:

We openly declare that we do not recognize the regime of blasphemers; we do not accept their authority and do not bow to their rule. We are in no way bound by their laws and directives.

They remained faithful to this declaration throughout. During this period they published many leaflets decrying the "unnecessary Zionist war." "It is preferable to live as slaves," they wrote in the February 1948 issue of their broadsheet *Hahoma*, "than to die as 'heroes'." They made no secret of their preference for an Arab victory or, better still, for the continuation of British rule over the Land of Israel. On the eve of the British departure from the country, they directed a written appeal to the British Administration which included the words: "Our esteemed Government: take mercy on us and retract your decision to relinquish your rule over our holy land," adding that the government of the country had been entrusted to the British by "Divine Providence."

Numerous documents exist to prove the inglorious role played by the *Neturei Karta* extremists during this critical period in Jewish history. These included open demonstrations against the newly constituted Jewish authorities set up during the emergency; secret attempts to make contact with the enemy in order to surrender; distributing defeatist literature among the Jerusalem population; and appealing to Jews abroad to desist from assisting "The Zionist murderers" in their "godless battle."

10. *Record of Subversion Since the Establishment of the State*

When the question of the internationalization of Jerusalem was the subject of critical discussion in the United Nations, the *Neturei Karta* leadership distributed literature applauding the establishment of a separate Jerusalem city outside the borders of "the Zionist State." Between 1948 and 1950 they distributed a number of memoranda among the delegations of the United Nations, attacking the State of Israel for having declared Jerusalem as the capital city. Paradoxically, in pursuing this line of reasoning, they automatically allied themselves with extreme Christian and Moslem forces which, likewise, sought to bring about the internationalization of Israel's capital.

Since that time, their energies have been devoted almost entirely to attacking religious institutions and personalities in Israel, the religious parties, Government acts and, not least, Sabbath traffic. Over the

course of the years, they have held repeated demonstrations in the streets of Jerusalem against the mobilization of women for national service, the construction of a swimming pool in Jerusalem and Sabbath traffic. Their anti-Israel literature, which is distributed both inside and outside the country, has never ceased.

11. *Support Abroad*

A new development, which has only occurred since the establishment of the State, is the emergence abroad of a body of support for the *Neturei Karta* cause. It is centred mainly in the Williamsburg district of Brooklyn, New York, and is made up almost entirely of the followers of the Satmar Rebbe, Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, a man known for his extreme views and opposition to the Jewish State. He is today generally spoken of as the spiritual leader of *Neturei Karta*.

It is, indeed, ironic that virtually all the anti-Israel propaganda disseminated in the United States originates from two main sources—the local Arab information services and the Williamsburg headquarters of the Satmar Rebbe. The literature of the latter group is no less vitriolic or slanderous in content than that of the former. The terms employed by both are remarkably similar; they include such epithets as "Fascist," "Nazi State," "the Israel Gestapo," "pogromists." Under a cover name, "The League for the Defence of Religious Freedom in Israel" (*sic*), these few thousand extremists have,

in the past, held public demonstrations in the United States, on one occasion in front of the White House. The latest demonstration, on 4 November 1963, outside the offices of the Israel Consulate General in New York was exceptional only by virtue of the swastikas daubed by a number of the demonstrators on the walls of the building. Otherwise it was much in character with the previous demonstrations organized by this group.

12. *The Attitude of the Israel Government towards Neturei Karta*

The attitude of all Israel Governments since the founding of the State towards *Neturei Karta* has been one of tolerance and non-interference. At no time has the Government of Israel taken steps to outlaw the group or to interfere with its activities. As a democratic country, the State of Israel upholds to the letter the principle of freedom of speech—even when this principle is, on occasion, employed by certain groups to discredit the name of Israel.

It is the view of many that the attitude of patience and tolerance shown by the Israel authorities towards the *Neturei Karta* extremists is somewhat exaggerated. Here, after all, is a group—albeit a small one—which refuses to recognize the State or the authority of its elected institutions; which boycotts all local and national elections; which refuses to pay taxes; whose sons and daughters do not even register for compulsory national service, let alone serve in the armed forces; a group which ex-

exploits every opportunity to besmirch the integrity of the country in which they live, and which has a record of past behaviour tantamount to treachery. In what country, it may be asked, would such an association of individuals be permitted to spread its pernicious propaganda and demonstratively to ignore all elementary duties of citizenship?

If, in Israel, the authorities tend to turn a blind eye, and act only when compelled to do so, on occasions when the public peace is actually disturbed, they are motivated by a compound of practical realism and an overriding desire to respect the convictions of the individual. True, the attitudes of *Neturei Karta* are characterized by a fanaticism which repels all but a tiny segment of the population, religious and non-religious alike. But it is precisely because the adherents are so insignificant in number that the authorities can afford to display a generous tolerance and allow this group of Jerusalem extremists to live their lives undisturbed according to the dictates of their consciences, so long, of course, as they create no overt disturbances.

This is the policy pursued by that very regime which is publicly vilified by the *Neturei Karta* sympathizers, who call the Jewish State a "Nazi regime carrying out an inquisition against religion," and who accuse the Israel police of "perpetrating pogroms."

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER

Hasidic Jews Picket Israeli Consulate Here

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The New York Times

One of the reverse swastikas that were painted on the Israeli Consulate here during protest by Hasidic Jews

Wide publicity was given in the foreign press to the swastika daubing on the walls of the Israel Consulate General in New York—the work of *Neturei Karta* sympathisers.

שמע ישראל

האם טח עיניכם מראות ומהשכל לבותיכם עד שבעיניים
עצמות אתם הולכים שולק אחרי עגל הציונות. עד שגולו
מכם את נשמתכם ואת הורתכם ושרפי נשמת בניכם
ובנותיכם, ועוד ידם נטוי ח"ו.

ועתה קמו להפקיר גם את גופכם ונפש עולליכם וטפכם, ואלה הבעלי
האוות שקראים לעצמם מנהיגים. על שבר בית ישראל, נשמתים אחד אחד לחורל
מטעמים מדיניים והסרת העידוף מהם כינו להם עשרות אורזנים לברוח ולהמלט
על נפשם לעת מצו ח"ו.

האינכם מכירים את מחוסרי אחריות אלה, אשר עבור
בצע כסף, "דאלארים" וכבוד מדומה ואנביצי' הפקירו
ומפקירים את דם הישוב כולו?

ועתה ישראל!

קומו והתקוממו פולכם כאיש אחד, נגד שלטונם של
בעלי האוות ותועבות סוחרי דמים אלה.

לכו ונשובה אל ד' ואל תוהיק לקבל עלינו עול מלכותו ותורתו הק', ובזכות זה
מתוך צרה ימציאנו פדות ורווחה ונזכה לגאולה שלימה על ידי משיח צדקנו בבי"א.

הסדרות

שלומי אמוני ישראל

1948: One of the many leaflets distributed by *Neturei Karta* extremists exhorting the residents of besieged Jerusalem to rebel against the newly-established independent Jewish administration.

A PLEA

FROM The thousands of veteran
inhabitants in the neighborhood of
the Mandelbaum Gate.

TO The tourists coming to the
Holy Land and to the sector of
Jerusalem now occupied by the
domineering powers of the state
named "Israel", who must pass thro-
ugh the Mandelbaum Gate, to and
from the Jordanian sector.

1964: A page from a leaflet distributed by the *Neturei Karta* to Christian tourists passing through the Mandelbaum Gate. Note the reference to "Jerusalem, Palestine."

in the name of the veteran inhabitants of Jerusalem, Palestine, residing in the neighborhood of the Mandelbaum Gate



Placards at the New York demonstration, 4 November 1963

13. *The Restraint of the Israel Police*

This slander against the Israel Police Force is all the more outrageous when one bears in mind that not a few of its members are religious Jews. Sabbath after Sabbath, Israeli policemen have been called out on special duty to maintain order in the Mea Shearim streets because of the lawlessness of a few score of individuals. They have been subject to gross and vulgar provocation; they have been spat at, cursed, and called names which have taxed their discipline to the extreme. Cries of "Frenkim" (an abusive term comparable to the expression "Wog") have been hurled at Jewish policemen of oriental origin. Men who have survived Hitler's concentration camps have had to stand by while being called "Nazi" and "Fascist thug." Only when actual force and violence were employed by the demonstrators against them personally, or against vehicles passing to and from the Mandelbaum Gate, were they given the command to act and re-establish order. Indeed, it may be said with pride that, throughout this whole episode, the Israel police have behaved with unprecedented restraint, which does credit to the Force they serve.

PART II

**Israel – the World's Foremost
Jewish Religious Centre**

14. From the leaflets distributed by *Neturei Karta* sympathizers, as well as from their statements, a completely false picture of Israel emerges. Its Government is portrayed as an avowedly anti-religious regime which does not hesitate to mobilize the full force of its authority to persecute and harass every vestige of religious life in the Jewish State. This calculated campaign of hatred knows no bounds, and its misguided instigators are capable of resorting to the vilest falsehoods in their quest to blacken Israel's name. The baselessness of their statements is readily apparent to anyone who has even a slight knowledge of the true nature of Israel's religious life. Indeed, nowhere in the world does there exist such a flourishing and dynamic Jewish religious life on every level—religious, communal, institutional and organizational—as in the State of Israel.

Israel is a democracy which guarantees freedom of religion and of conscience, a community founded on a covenant of mutual tolerance between the various segments of the population. In the Basic Principles of all Governments formed since the establishment of Israel, the following axiom has been reiterated:

In this period of the ingathering of exiles, who are

assembling in our homeland—Jewish communities which have for hundreds of years been under the influence of cultures and environments widely differing in beliefs and opinions, customs and ways—the unity of the nation and the proper conduct of the affairs of state require the development of mutual tolerance, and the freedom of conscience and religion. The Government will prevent religious or anti-religious coercion from any quarter whatsoever.

Here in this statement, is an exposition of the Government of Israel's attitude to the religion-State question. It does not tolerate religious coercion, just as it condemns and outlaws all manifestations of anti-religious coercion. Within this sphere of reference the Israel authorities operate, acutely conscious of the fact that Israel was founded as a Jewish State with all that the term implies in the cultural and spiritual spheres.

15. *The Quality of Jewish Life in the Jewish State*

The very fact that Israel constitutes an autonomous national Jewish framework with its own sovereign institutions endows the country with a rare quality of Jewishness which has no counterpart anywhere in the world. The street, the home, the school, the university, the army camp, the office and factory—all are steeped in an atmosphere of Jewish culture, heritage and traditional association made all the more meaningful by the biblical panorama on every side. The first programme to be

heard on the radio each morning is the traditional morning prayer and psalm reading. On any day of the week, one can tune in to advanced lessons in the Bible, Mishna or Talmud, not to mention the daily Bible reading and commentary at the peak listening hour before the evening news broadcast.

The atmosphere of Sabbath and festivals in Israel is all-embracing and all-pervasive, for these are, by law, national days of rest. Shops and factories, Government institutions and public enterprises are closed and all but the most essential services cease to operate.

The efflorescence of Jewish literature in modern Israel is in itself a profound testimony to the richness and variety of the country's Jewish life. Hardly a week goes by without some new work being published; the demand for the great traditional classics—first and foremost the Bible and the Talmud—has led to an unprecedented spate of new editions and reprints, and popular newspapers buy up thousands of copies for distribution among their readers.

The very language of the people—Hebrew—is an expression of the nation's unbroken ties with its cultural and historic past. To pupils in Israel's schools the study of Bible, Mishna and Talmud—which are an integral part of the curriculum in every school—is no mere academic pursuit; these cherished treasures of the Jewish heritage are endowed with a vitality and meaningfulness which are natural to boys and girls weaned in the environment

of the Land of the Bible and whose everyday medium of speech is the language of the Bible.

Only in such a cultural climate could the number of Yeshivot (talmudical seminaries) in Israel have grown from 35 to 190 within hardly more than a decade. Side by side with the classical type of Yeshiva transplanted from Eastern Europe are to be found the manifestly Israeli category—high-school Yeshivot, vocational Yeshivot and agricultural Yeshivot—which combine the finest traditions of the old with the distinctive qualities of the new Israel. This unprecedented expansion, which has transformed Israel into the greatest Yeshiva centre in the world, would have been unthinkable but for the overall support of the authorities and the conducive spiritual atmosphere which has given momentum to their growth. In the words of the Minister of Religious Affairs, Dr. Zerah Warhaftig: "The State of Israel can boast today of a Torah centre which represents in its number of students, level of quality, variety and ramification, a cultural phenomenon that has no equal in past generations."

16. *Official Recognition of Religious Institutions*

Out of this pattern and rhythm of Jewish life have emerged significant acts of legislation granting official recognition to diverse religious institutions and practices, some of which are listed below.

(a) *Sabbath Observance*

There are two legislative acts regulating public Sabbath observance. The first is included in the Orders of the Rule and Law, 1949, under which the Sabbath and Jewish festivals are established as the regular days of rest for Jews throughout the country.

The second is the Work and Rest Hours Law of 1951, which lays down that every employee in Israel is to be granted at least 36 continuous hours of leisure each week. As regards Jews, this weekly rest-period is to coincide with the Sabbath day, while a similar rest is to be granted on the festivals.

In addition, numerous municipal by-laws are in force regulating the closing and opening hours of cafés and restaurants on the eve and termination of Sabbaths and festivals, the suspension of public transport, the closing of streets in religious quarters, the closing of places of amusement, etc.

(b) *Rabbinical Courts*

The Rabbinical Courts Law of 1953 grants exclusive jurisdiction to the rabbinical courts in matters of marriage and divorce pertaining to Jews, as well as other matters relating to divorce suits. In other questions of personal status the rabbinical courts have jurisdiction if the parties concerned express their consent.

The Rabbinical Courts Law has increased the powers of the rabbinical courts to implement their

decisions; under certain conditions the law provides that their decrees are enforceable by imprisonment. The rabbinical courts are empowered to summon persons to appear before them and to order the appearance of witnesses. Decisions of a rabbinical court are not subject to review by any civil court on material grounds.

(c) *Religious State Education*

In accordance with the State Education Law of 1953, the State provides religious education for all children between the ages of 5 and 14 whose parents state their preference for such tuition. By the terms of this law, "Religious State Education means State education, with the distinction that its institutions are religious as to their way of life, curriculum, teachers and inspectors." More than IL 30 million are expended annually by the Government on its religious educational programme, which accounts for about one-third of the total elementary school system. In addition, there are Independent (recognized) religious schools which enjoy substantial financial support, the Government paying 85 per cent of the teachers' salaries and the local authorities providing funds in many instances for the construction and maintenance of school premises.

(d) *Religious Observance in the Army*

With reference to the place and status of religion in the Israel Defence Forces, express rules have been laid down for the maintenance of Jewish religious

law in camps and in the field. These provide for the complete maintenance of *kashrut* (the Jewish dietary laws) in all Army kitchens, while the Standing Orders of the General Staff fix observance of the Sabbath and festivals as mandatory. On such days all work is to cease in the Army, except for operations which are most vital for the security of the State. Granting of leave is so timed that soldiers need not travel on the Sabbath, whether on their way out or upon returning to the base or unit.

Religious life in the Army is supervised by a military chaplaincy responsible for religious guidance to soldiers, religious organization within the Army as a whole, supervising the execution of orders relating to religious matters, and the organization of religious studies. It will be appreciated that, because of the broad areas encompassed by regulations relating to religion in the Army, these functions in the Israel Army extend far beyond the usual chaplaincy duties.

17. *Diverse Legislation, Directives and Facilities*

(a) A basic principle accepted in Israel is that the Government ought to supply religious facilities and services in so far as these are of a communal nature and when they can be supplied to the individual only through the agency of the community. This principle has been given effect, on the national level, through the operations of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and on a municipal level, through the local religious councils and committees.

According to the Jewish Religious Services Budget Act of 1949, the Israel Government is bound to provide, in whole or in part, the budgets of the local religious councils. Wherever such a council is associated with a local authority, two-thirds of its expenses are covered by this authority and one-third by the Government through the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Otherwise, the Ministry is responsible for the entire budget. The tasks of the religious councils are varied: they supervise ritual slaughter (*shehita*) and *kashrut* (observance of religious dietary laws), provide for the erection and maintenance of synagogues and ritual baths (*mikvaot*), conduct classes and lectures on Jewish religious subjects, and disseminate religious literature. They carry out propaganda for Sabbath observance and conduct marriage registration. One of their principal duties is the appointment of local rabbis and the maintenance of the local rabbinate.

(b) The Ministry of Religious Affairs supervises almost 200 local religious councils and nearly 400 religious committees, and these, in turn, work closely with the 370 officially appointed rabbis and the functionaries of some 4,000 synagogues.

(c) Questions of a purely religious nature are subject to the authority of the Chief Rabbinate, which is the supreme religious authority in Israel. The Chief Rabbinate comprises one Ashkenazi and one Sephardi Chief Rabbi and a Supreme Rabbinical Council. It decides on the interpretation of Jewish law and supervises the rabbinical courts.

There are eight regional rabbinical courts with a bench of 64 religious judges (*Dayanim*), and a Rabbinical Court of Appeals presided over by the two Chief Rabbis. The appointment of *Dayanim* is regulated by special legislation embodied in the *Dayanim* Act of 1955.

(d) Mention has already been made of the law promulgated in 1953 governing marriage and divorce in Israel. This measure establishes Jewish law as the law in accordance with which marriages and divorces shall be performed in Israel between Jews. In other words, no marriage or divorce performed in Israel between two Jews is regarded as binding unless performed in accordance with Jewish law. (The term Jew, as defined in a directive of the Ministry of the Interior, refers to one who is Jewish according to the religious legal definition, i.e. the offspring of a Jewish mother or a convert to Judaism.)

The Women's Equal Rights Act of 1951 specifically stipulates that its provisions shall not affect any legal prohibition or permission relating to marriage and divorce.

(e) A law banning pig breeding was passed by the Knesset in 1962. This prohibits the breeding of pigs in all but a number of defined localities which are populated mainly by non-Jews.

(f) The Armed Services Law states that exemption shall be granted to a woman who declares herself unable, on religious grounds, to serve in the armed forces. It is likewise accepted that Yeshiva

students are deferred from service for the duration of their studies. (It should be noted that only under exceptional circumstances is a university student granted such a privilege.)

(g) The Israel Independence Day Law stipulates that in the event of Independence Day falling on Friday, Saturday or Sunday, the festival shall be advanced in order to avoid Sabbath desecration.

(h) The National Land Law lays down that none of its provisions shall in any way interfere with the observance of *shmitta*, the Sabbatical year.

(i) The Law of Anatomy and Pathology, 1953, contains regulations concerning autopsies of persons of Jewish faith, which are all in keeping with religious law.

(j) The Law relating to military cemeteries, promulgated in 1950, states that an officer may order an exhumation only after consultation with the Chief Chaplain.

(k) The Child Adoption Law of 1960 declares that the foster-parents must be of the same religion as the adopted child. It furthermore states that the adoption of a child must be in harmony with the religious laws concerning marriage and divorce.

(l) Various orders are in force relating to tax exemption of Yeshivot and other religious institutions, and the duty-free import of religious requisites such as Torah scrolls, phylacteries, *mezuzot*, etc. There are also directives concerning the maintenance of *kashrut* in all public institutions and services.

These laws and directives do not cover the full spectrum of legislation bearing on matters of religious concern, but they suffice to prove to what extent Israel's legislature has shown itself conscious and respectful of religious practice and principle. The laws range from acts of far-reaching consequence, such as marriage and divorce and religious education, to subsidiary provisions contained in laws of a secular nature, but which relate, at one point or another, to religious practice. Obviously, not all of them meet with the unanimous approval of the population. But in so far as they mirror the majority opinion of the State's democratically elected parliament, the Knesset, they constitute an expression of the dominant will of the people, which, in the final analysis, is the source of their validity.

18. Summary

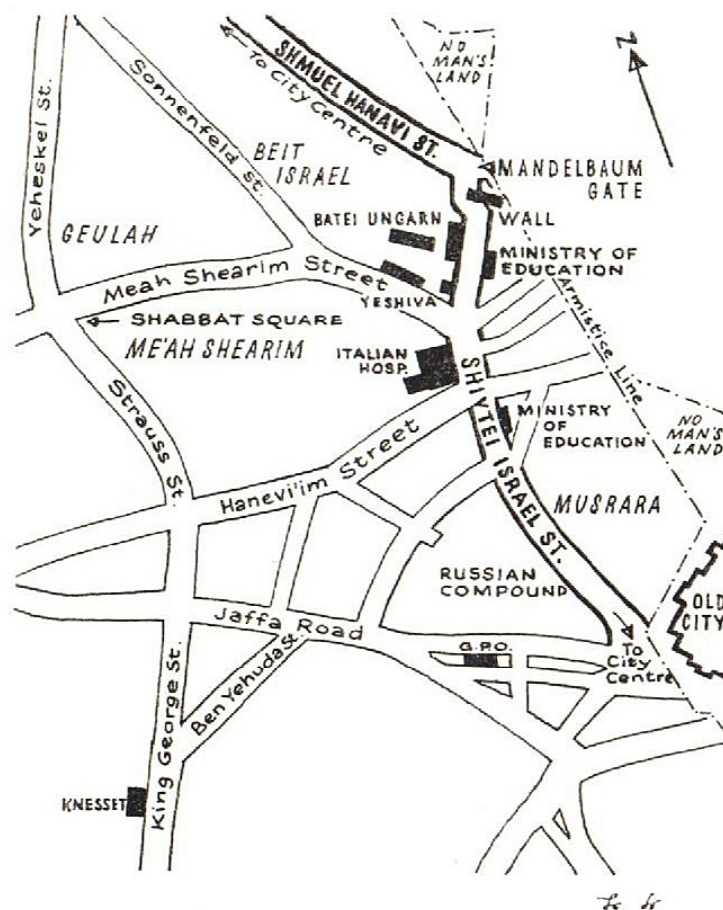
These are the facts relating to the nature and quality of religious life in the State of Israel. The very existence of Israel as an autonomous Jewish society releases untapped spiritual and cultural energies which are fostered and encouraged by the institutions of State. It could not be otherwise, for it was largely for this that people struggled and made sacrifices in the cause of national sovereignty. They fought so that the flower of Jewish cultural distinctiveness be allowed to flourish undisturbed in its native environment. And the result is a Jewish State with Hebrew as its language, with its schools and Yeshivot, Sabbaths and festivals, its widespread

religious customs and practices, and above all, its deep-rooted Biblical heritage.

Thus it need hardly be said that the ugly and vicious regime described in the literature of the *Neturei Karta* extremists and their sympathizers is not that of the State of Israel. It is the figment of an imagination fed on prejudice and narrow-mindedness. Perhaps the *Neturei Karta* phenomenon is one of the national maladies contracted during the 2,000 years of exile and, as such, has to be suffered by the body of the nation. But this is no cause to condone the excesses of a group which, in its fanaticism, consistently and consciously stoops to the lowest levels in order to distort beyond all recognition everything that is good and worthy in the land and people of Israel.

APPENDIX I

Traffic Through the Mandelbaum Gate



The Mandelbaum Gate and the Mea Shearim quarter

(a) *The Position of the Mandelbaum Gate*

The Mandelbaum Gate (so-called after a now disused building named "Mandelbaum House") is the Israeli frontier and customs post on the border with Jordan; it is the only crossing-point between the two countries. It is situated on the eastern edge of Jewish Jerusalem on the border established by the Armistice Agreement after the War of Independence. About 100 yards from the Mandelbaum Gate is the compound known as *Batei Ungarn* (Hungarian Houses), which form the north-eastern limit of the Mea Shearim quarter.

The main part of the city can be reached from the Mandelbaum Gate along one of two routes: in a north-westerly direction along Shmuel Hanavi Street, or southwards along Shivtei Israel Street, which at one point skirts the *Batei Ungarn* compound. Access along this latter route was opened up some four years ago by the laying of a 300-yard stretch of new road joining Shivtei Israel Street to the Mandelbaum Gate approach-way. This new section was built following noisy and violent demonstrations instigated by *Neturei Karta* elements protesting against the Sabbath traffic to and from the Mandelbaum Gate passing along Shmuel Hanavi

and adjacent streets inhabited mostly by ultra-orthodox residents.

(b) *The Political Importance of the Mandelbaum Gate*

When seen in the context of Israel's highly complex geo-political situation, the Mandelbaum Gate border-post assumes a unique and vital importance. Each of the country's land frontiers is bordered by hostile territories—Lebanon and Syria in the North, Jordan in the East and Egypt in the South. The Mandelbaum Gate constitutes the one existing point of entry and exit, the sole artery of overland traffic between Israel and Jordan, and is, indeed, the principal link with the Arab world.

This fact is crucial to any discussion on the question of Sabbath traffic through the Mandelbaum Gate, precisely because it involves national interests of the greatest magnitude. This explains the Government's refusal to agree to the demands of certain religious groups that the border-post be closed on Sabbaths and festivals. There are strong grounds for the expectation that, were Israel to bar traffic through the Mandelbaum Gate on Saturdays, Jordan would close its side of the frontier on Fridays, the Moslem Sabbath, if only for prestige reasons.

(c) *Christian Pilgrim Traffic through the Mandelbaum Gate*

The Government has invested a good deal of effort in attracting Christian tourists to Israel and

their number is increasing year by year. During the past twelve months 35,000 Christian pilgrims crossed into Israel through the Mandelbaum Gate. It will be appreciated that this tourism is all the more important to Israel when one considers that the visitors generally enter the country fresh from travel in the Arab States. While there, they are exposed to the full pressure of Arab anti-Israel propaganda, coupled with not a little anti-Semitic indoctrination. Bearing in mind the large number of people involved, and the fact that many of them are influential clergy and laymen, Israel is, naturally, vitally interested in counter-acting and rectifying the distorted picture drawn of the Jewish State by the Arab propagandists. Consequently, the authorities have spared no effort to encourage Christian traffic and provide the necessary travel information facilities.

One of the most important features of the Holy Land pilgrimages (which include both Israel and Jordan) is the Holy Mass at the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, which takes place at an early hour each Sunday morning. The set timetables of the tourists while in Jordan—over which Israel has no control—are generally such that in order to be present at this service the Christian groups must, as a rule, cross into Israel on Saturday. From Jerusalem they proceed directly to Nazareth where they spend the night in preparation for the early Sunday Mass. It has been ascertained that were their entrance into Israel barred on Saturday, with the result that they could not make the journey

to Nazareth in time for the service, large numbers of these tourists would omit Israel entirely from their itineraries.

(d) *Efforts to Resolve Sabbath Traffic Problems*

It has already been mentioned that, following violent *Neturei Karta* demonstrations in 1959, an alternative route was built to the frontier with a detour leading off from Shivtei Israel Street. Now, four years later, these same individuals have begun molesting traffic along the new route, which was originally built to avoid, as far as conditions allowed, any offence to their sensibilities. Why, after four years of silence, they have renewed their violence and illegal demonstrations has yet to be explained. Indeed, there is evidence to show that, whatever the measures adopted to remove Sabbath traffic from this vicinity, these extremists will persist in their lawlessness, since it is directed not so much against Sabbath desecration as against the authority of the State.

Be this as it may, the authorities have gone to great lengths in their search for some reasonable solution to the problem. On 29 September 1963, the Cabinet appointed a Ministerial Committee to enquire into the matter. This Committee, in turn, appointed a technical committee, headed by the Central District Police Commissioner, to investigate the practical feasibility of finding an alternative route or routes to divert traffic away from the *Batei Ungarn*.

Various proposals were examined, including the opening of a new frontier post on some other sector of the border. It soon became apparent, however, that the Jordanian authorities saw no cause to accommodate Israel in solving a purely Israeli problem. The idea of building a new road or roads to the Mandlebaum Gate proved impractical because of strategic and geographical considerations. (As a study of the map shows, any such new route would have to pass through at least one orthodox residential area, or pass by building sites owned by religious societies and earmarked for the construction of Yeshivot—talmudical seminaries—and apartment houses for orthodox families.)

With these considerations in mind, the Prime Minister subsequently made the offer to construct, at the Government's expense, alternate housing for the 178 residents of the *Batei Ungarn* compound whose houses directly overlook Shivtei Israel Street. It was specifically stated that, in proposing this scheme, there was no intention of moving the people concerned outside the Mea Shearim district, with which they have close ancestral and spiritual ties. The new apartments would be built in the same quarter, but away from the main thoroughfare.

APPENDIX II

Record of Sabbath Disturbances

July-October 1963

Saturday, July 27

Illegal demonstration at the Mandelbaum Gate as Christian tourists entered buses. Stones were thrown at the departing buses.

Friday Evening, August 2

Police dismantled a barricade in Shivtei Israel Street.

Saturday, August 3

Illegal demonstration at the Mandelbaum Gate. A teen-ager was arrested for throwing a stone at a patrolman.

Saturday, August 10

Tourist buses passed through the Mandelbaum Gate unmolested. A child threw stones at two scooters on Shivtei Israel Street.

Saturday, August 17

A car driven by an invalid along Shmuel Hanavi Street was stoned by Yeshiva students. The invalid was beaten with his own crutches. On the same day a bus carrying Christian tourists was stoned in Shivtei Israel Street. Stones were thrown at a UN vehicle.

Saturday, August 31

An American Yeshiva student and a boy were detained for interfering with traffic on Shivtei Israel Street.

Saturday, September 7

Anti-traffic barricade of garbage cans and barrels was set up in Shivtei Israel Street. An illegal demonstration, consisting of 15 adults and some 50 boys, took place. Later, police on Shivtei Israel Street were stoned.

Friday Evening, September 13

A motorcyclist was beaten and had to be treated in hospital.

Saturday, September 14

Three policemen were injured by stones on ordering demonstrators throwing stones at vehicles to disperse.

Saturday, September 21

Two policemen were injured in Shivtei Israel Street. Police patrols were jeered at. At an illegal demonstration later in the day, stones were thrown at police reinforcements.

Saturday, September 28 (Yom Kippur)

No incidents.

Thursday, October 3 (Sukkot)

Illegal demonstration blocked traffic and stoned cars. Police dispersed demonstrators, who retreated to balconies and bombarded police with missiles.

Saturday, October 5

Small groups of demonstrators shouted "Shabbes!" at Israeli vehicles. Windshield of a UN car was cracked by a stone.

Saturday, October 19

150 demonstrators shouted "Shabbes" at empty tourist buses *en route* to the Mandelbaum Gate. An attempt to set up a barricade was thwarted by police. In the afternoon, a crowd of 300 demonstrated. Stones and other missiles were thrown at passing vehicles; several policemen were injured.

Friday Evening, October 25

Anti-traffic barricade set up by demonstrators was dismantled by police. A UN vehicle was stoned.

Saturday, October 26

A visitor from the Kfar Habad orthodox village was wounded in the head by a stone while remonstrating with *Neturei Karta* adherents.

Intermittent violence continued throughout the day. Illegal demonstrations were continuously dispersed by the police. Incidents reached a climax in the late afternoon when rocks, planks, broken glass,

bottles and buckets of water were thrown from balconies at police contingents. Fire hoses were trained on the demonstrators. The same evening, the Ministry of Education, which had served as headquarters for police reinforcements, was ransacked by unidentified religious extremists.

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